

Growth kinetic and composition of the interfacial layer for RF sputtering Al₂O₃ layer on germanium

Siti Kudnie Sahari, Muhammad Kashif and Norsuzailina Mohamed Sutan
Faculty of Engineering, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Kota Samarahan, Malaysia

Zaidi Embong

Faculty of Science, Technology and Human Development, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, Batu Pahat, Malaysia

Nik Anni Fathi Nik Zaini Fathi

Faculty of Engineering, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Kota Samarahan, Malaysia

Azrul Azlan Hamzah

Institute of Microengineering and Nanotechnology, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Malaysia

Rohana Sapawi

Faculty of Engineering, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia

Burhanuddin Yeop Majlis

Institute of Microengineering and Nanotechnology, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Malaysia, and

Ibrahim Ahmad

Department of Electronics and Communication, Universiti Tenaga Nasional Malaysia, Kajang, Malaysia

Abstract

Purpose – The quality of GeOx–Ge interface and the equivalent oxide thickness (EOT) are the main issues in fabricating high-k/Ge gate stack due to the low-k of GeOx interfacial layer (IL). Therefore, a precise study of the formation of GeOx IL and its contribution to EOT is of utmost importance. In this study, the GeOx ILs were formed through post-oxidation annealing of sputtered Al₂O₃ on the Ge substrate. The purpose of this paper is to report on growth kinetics and composition of IL between Al₂O₃ and Ge for HCl- and HF-last Ge surface.

Design/methodology/approach – After wet chemical cleaning with HCl or HF, Al₂O₃ was grown onto the Ge surface by RF sputtering. Thickness and composition of IL formed after post-anneal deposition at 400°C in dry oxygen ambience were evaluated as a function of deposition time by FESEM and characterized by X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy, respectively.

Findings – It was observed that the composition and thickness of IL were dependent on the starting surface and an aluminum germinate-like composition was formed during RF sputtering for both HF- and HCl-last starting surface.

Originality/value – The novelty of this work is to investigate the starting surface of Ge to IL growth between Al₂O₃/Ge that will lead to the improvement in Ge metal insulator field effect transistors (MISFETs) application.

Keywords Interfacial layer, HCl, Germanium, Germanium oxide, HF, X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Germanium (Ge) becomes a candidate to replace silicon (Si) because it has four times the hole mobility and twice the electron mobility than Si for metal oxide field effect transistors (MOSFETs) application (Shang *et al.*, 2010; Sze, 1981; Saraswat *et al.*, 2005). Developing a suitable gate stack on Ge has become one of the remaining challenges that Ge-based devices must overcome if they are to replace Si as channel

material (Goley and Hudait, 2014). There are two important technological requirements for the gate stacks to be solved to realize the high performance of Ge MOSFETs; sufficient passivated MOS interface with low interface trap density (D_{it}) and thin equivalent oxide thickness (EOT) (Shang *et al.*, 2007; Hamzah *et al.*, 2007, 2013). To achieve thin EOT, high-k dielectrics become very attractive candidates as a dielectric material. Many extensive researches have been done on several high-k candidates such as HfO₂, ZnO₂, rare-earth materials, Al₂O₃ and etc. (Matsubara *et al.*, 2008; Nakakita

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